

9336
A 309

★ No 9335. 4a 309



GIVEN BY

U. S. SUPT. OF DOCUMENTS

7 9335.4A309
TESTIMONY OF LYNNE L. PROUT

*U.S. Congress. House. Committee on
"Un-American Activities."*

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

FEBRUARY 14, 1952

Printed for the use of the Committee on Un-American Activities



5683
11
UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1952

4 9335-4 A 309

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

567 8 1952

COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTS I
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JOHN S. WOOD, Georgia, *Chairman*

FRA	E. WALTER, Pennsylvania	HAROLD H. VELDE, Illinois
MORGAN M. MOULDER, Missouri		BERNARD W. KEARNEY, New York
CLYDE DOYLE, California		DONALD L. JACKSON, California
JAMES B. FRAZIER, Jr., Tennessee		CHARLES E. POTTER, Michigan

FRANK S. TAVENNER, Jr., *Counsel*
LOUIS J. RUSSELL, *Senior Investigator*
JOHN W. CARRINGTON, *Clerk of Committee*
RAPHAEL I. NIXON, *Director of Research*

TESTIMONY OF LYNNE L. PROUT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1952

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON
UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES,
Washington, D. C.

PUBLIC HEARING

A subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities met, pursuant to call, at 10:50 a. m., in room 226, Old House Office Building, Hon. John S. Wood, chairman, presiding.

Committee members present: Representatives John S. Wood, Francis E. Walter, James B. Frazier, Jr., and Bernard W. Kearney.

Staff members present: Frank S. Tavenner, Jr., counsel; Thomas W. Beale, Sr., assistant counsel; John W. Carrington, clerk; Courtney E. Owens, investigator, and A. S. Poore, editor.

Mr. WOOD. The committee will be in order.

For the purpose of this hearing, I have set up a subcommittee composed of Messrs. Walter, Frazier, Kearney, and Wood. All members are present.

Whom do you have this morning?

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Lynne L. Prout, please.

Mr. WOOD. Will you raise your right hand, please, sir?

Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you will give this subcommittee, will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. PROUT. I do.

TESTIMONY OF LYNNE L. PROUT

Mr. WOOD. Are you represented by counsel?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir; I am not.

Mr. WOOD. You are entitled to counsel if you so desire.

Mr. PROUT. I know that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you state your full name, please, sir?

Mr. PROUT. Lynne L. Prout; L-y-n-n-e L. P-r-o-u-t.

Mr. TAVENNER. When and where were you born?

Mr. PROUT. At Miltonvale, Kans., in 1917.

Mr. TAVENNER. What is your present profession?

Mr. PROUT. I work for the RFC in San Antonio, Tex.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you state briefly for the committee, please, what your education and training has been?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir. I have a degree conferred by Kansas State College in the field of industrial journalism.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you state for the committee just what your record of employment has been?

Mr. PROUT. Yes. In the spring of 1941, I went to work for the Sioux City Tribune.

Mr. TAVENNER. Let me interrupt you at that point.

When did you finish your educational training?

Mr. PROUT. In May of 1940, except for one course which I finished by correspondence.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, if you will proceed, please.

Mr. PROUT. In about May of 1941 I received an appointment for the Office of Chief of Staff here in Washington. I worked with them for approximately 8 months, and then I was transferred to the Office of the Secretary of War in the Division of Personnel. I stayed with them until about March of 1942 and then I was transferred to San Antonio, Tex., in their field office.

In March, I believe it was March of 1943, I went to work for the Office of the Quartermaster General, stationed at the San Antonio General Depot.

I worked there until November, I believe it was, of the same year.

Then I went on a travel status with the Quartermaster General's office making personnel surveys of a number of Quartermaster and ASF depots.

Would you care to have me list those depots?

Mr. TAVENNER. I think not, at this time.

Mr. PROUT. All right, sir.

In about March of 1944, I transferred to the California Quartermaster Depot and there I was personnel officer until approximately April or May of 1946. At that time I transferred to the RFC in San Antonio, and I am presently employed there.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Prout, the committee has gained information to the effect that you at one time were a member of the Communist Party. A member of the staff called upon you and, as I understand it, you have furnished the committee with some basic information.

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Relating to your membership in the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. Is that correct?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you become a member of the party?

Mr. PROUT. In 1938.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you be more definite as to the time? That is, as to the month of the year? Was it in the spring, or in the fall?

Mr. PROUT. I think it was in the fall of the year; yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. How long did you remain in the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. I was only in for a short time. By this I mean a dues-paying member, actually a member of the party, for, I would estimate, 3 months.

But during the period 1938 and 1939, I participated in practically everything that they did at that location. I am just trying to draw a distinction to cover the fact that I wasn't actually a dues-paying member for very long, but that I did engage in their activities for approximately 2 years, a little less than 2 years, I would say.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, will you tell us where you became a member and the circumstances under which you joined the party?

Mr. PROUT. I became a member——

Mr. TAVENNER. That is, the Communist Party.

Mr. PROUT. I became a member at Stillwater, Okla., while a student at Stillwater.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the name of the educational institution?

Mr. PROUT. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.

Mr. TAVENNER. What were the circumstances under which you became a member?

Mr. PROUT. I heard that such an organization existed, and I was interested, and I looked them up and asked them what it was all about. I went to a meeting or two; I think one meeting in Oklahoma City, not a meeting, but just to meet people.

Mr. TAVENNER. You mean to meet people within the party?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, within the party. Just at about that time they had announced a recruiting drive, the winner of which was to get a trip to New York City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, before you come into that, let us make certain as to how you got into the party.

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. You stated you attended several meetings. Were you accepted as a member at the first meeting, or when was it that you were accepted as a member?

Mr. PROUT. I think that probably it was a month or so after I made my first contact. I cannot recall just exactly when I signed a card.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, who had advised you in regard to the matter? Who recruited you into the party?

Mr. PROUT. I, of course, know the name. I am reluctant to give it. I don't know—is it necessary that I give the names?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes, sir; unless the chairman directs otherwise. (Representative James B. Frazier, Jr., left the hearing room at this point.)

Mr. WOOD. Yes, sir; you are directed to answer the question.

Mr. PROUT. The man was Harry Jury.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you spell the last name, please?

Mr. PROUT. It is J-u-r-y, I think. It could be J-u-r-e-y.

Mr. TAVENNER. What position did he hold at the school? Was he a student or a member of the faculty?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, he was a student.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were other persons taken into the Communist Party at the same time that you were?

Mr. PROUT. No.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you assigned to a group or unit of the party, commonly referred to as a cell?

Mr. PROUT. No. There actually was not a group in existence at the campus at that time, as far as I know. I think that Harry Jury and myself were the only two there at the time I joined the party.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, was a group formed after you and Mr. Jury became members?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, there was. I don't think the group was ever assigned a number or referred to in any way, but it was just a group of students.

Mr. TAVENNER. How many composed the group? How many persons ultimately became members while you were there?

Mr. PROUT. I would estimate 12, possibly as many as 15. Now, all of these people, or most of them, as a matter of fact, never actually participated, but there were that number that did join the party, approximately that number.

Mr. TAVENNER. What distinction are you drawing between participating and being a member? All members participate, do they not?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir; they actually didn't. A lot of them signed the card for the purpose of—again I am getting ahead—signed a card for the purpose of helping me win this trip. And some of them never even, I don't believe, attended one meeting.

But there were approximately 12 to 13 who actually did sign cards.

Mr. TAVENNER. I think probably in light of that statement you should explain the trip that you spoke about.

Mr. PROUT. Yes, the Oklahoma Communist Party announced this recruiting drive, the winners of which were to get this paid trip to New York City.

I am not sure, but I think a similar drive was made on a country-wide basis. I became quite interested in the possibility of that trip, and went to work recruiting, and, as I say, I brought into the party, I would judge, 12 people. It could have been 15; it might have been a few less.

Mr. TAVENNER. And that is the basis for your statement that some were active members, or some were participating members and some were not?

Mr. PROUT. That is right.

You see, the whole thing was to turn in cards. And I talked to my friends, and sometimes I paid their 10 cents. I think that is what it cost to get in. That way I did manage to win the trip to New York City.

Of the folks that I did bring in, some of them, I am almost sure, never even attended a meeting. Some of them, of course, did.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you explain to the committee just how you recruited these 15 persons into the Communist Party more fully than you have already stated?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; I sure will.

I would go to someone that I knew, a friend, or whatever, and tell him what was going on; tell him about the recruiting drive.

Mr. TAVENNER. Recruiting drive for the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; that is right.

Mr. WALTER. You did not conceal from anybody the purpose of this recruitment, so everybody that you attempted to recruit was fully aware that you were recruiting members for the Communist Party; is that correct?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; I think that is right.

Mr. WALTER. All right.

Mr. TAVENNER. So that each of these individuals knew, then, of course, that they were joining the Communist Party when they signed the Communist Party card?

Mr. PROUT. Yes. I don't think there is any doubt about that. I don't recall that the explanations that I gave were too lengthy, or anything like that, but I do believe that they would have known, yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. You stated that some of them participated in the activities of the party, and some did not. Now, what were the names of those who participated in the activities of the party?

Mr. PROUT. One would have been a chap by the name of Bernard Phillips.

Mr. TAVENNER. All right.

Mr. PROUT. Another would have been Pat Allen.

Mr. TAVENNER. How do you spell Allen?

Mr. PROUT. A-l-l-e-n.

One's last name was Davis; I don't seem to recall the first name.

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes. Was it a man or woman?

Mr. PROUT. A man. I am having difficulty going over the names.

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes, and I want you to be extremely careful about it and take what time you need to think the matter through.

Mr. PROUT. I am up against two hazards there. One is the time and the other is distinguishing then who did and who did not join.

Mr. TAVENNER. If you are having difficulty in distinguishing between those who participated actively and those who did not, suppose you just give us from this point on the names of those who did unite with the Communist Party as a result of your recruiting work.

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

There was a Joe, but I cannot recall his last name. I just can't think of the names.

(Representative James B. Frazier, Jr., returned to the hearing room at this point.)

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you recall the names of any others whom you recruited?

Mr. PROUT. I can see them, but I just can't recall their names.

Mr. TAVENNER. We may return to that.

Mr. TROUT. All right. Fine. I might—I have thought about it quite a bit, as a matter of fact.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were other members of the student body engaging in this same drive to recruit members in the Communist Party in the way of a contest for this trip?

Mr. PROUT. No. I was the only one who was working on it.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you give the committee, please, the names of the other members of the group, irrespective of whether you recruited them or not?

Mr. PROUT. It started out, of course, with Jury and myself. The only other members of the group that actually participated were Pat Allen and Bernard Phillips. And I am speaking there of the regular ones.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know what the party name of Jury was?

Mr. PROUT. Huscher.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you spell it, please?

Mr. PROUT. I think it is H-u-s-c-h-e-r.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was his first name? Do you recall?

Mr. PROUT. James, I believe.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you have a party name also?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; I did.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was your name?

Mr. PROUT. My name was Lee Moine.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you spell the last name, please?

Mr. PROUT. M-o-i-n-e.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did the other persons who became members also have pseudonyms?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; everyone did.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the purpose of using pseudonyms there among the members of the student body? You all knew each other, did you not?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, we sure did.

Mr. TAVENNER. Those who were outside of the party membership knew each of you in the party, did they not?

Mr. PROUT. Oh, yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the purpose of using pseudonyms?

Mr. PROUT. I don't know for sure. We never used them among ourselves. I suppose it was for purposes of correspondence or——

Mr. TAVENNER. Was it for the purpose of keeping a list of the members and the payment of dues by the members so as to keep the actual names secret should the list fall into the hands of a non-Communist?

Mr. PROUT. Yes—I am not sure of that; I assume that that would be true, yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where did you receive your instructions to use such names?

Mr. PROUT. From Oklahoma City, the Communist Party in Oklahoma City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, actually in this group that started at Stillwater it was apparently organized by Mr. Jury and yourself. Were you acting in that capacity under the direction of the members of the Communist Party outside of Stillwater?

In other words, were you doing this organization work at the request or suggestion of the Communist Party of the State of Oklahoma?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, tell us who gave you those directions.

Mr. PROUT. Mr. Robert Wood.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Robert Wood. And what position did he hold in the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. I cannot recall what his title was. It seems as though it was secretary.

Mr. TAVENNER. State secretary?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, but I am not sure of that.

Mr. TAVENNER. When you received those instructions, did you receive them at a Communist Party meeting, or did you receive them individually from Mr. Wood?

Mr. PROUT. You mean in writing or something like that?

Mr. TAVENNER. No; I meant were you in attendance at a Communist Party meeting of officials on a high level in the State of Oklahoma when you received the directions to engage in this recruiting and organization work at Stillwater?

Do you see what I am getting at?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, I do. I am trying to recall. I believe that I received the instructions at one time when I was at Oklahoma City, not at a meeting where there were a number of people present, but Wood, and perhaps one or two others. I am not sure of that answer. I cannot recall where that instruction was passed down.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where was the State headquarters of the Communist Party of Oklahoma located?

Mr. PROUT. It was in Oklahoma City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you remember the address?

Mr. PROUT. 129½ Grand, or Main; I am not sure which street. I think it was Grand.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, at the time you received these instructions, do you know, or can you give us the names of any persons present other than Robert Wood?

Mr. PROUT. I just cannot recall for sure the circumstances, so I cannot recall who else was present.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was Mr. Jury present with you?

Mr. PROUT. I just don't know.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you attend meetings of members of the Communist Party at its headquarters in Oklahoma City?

Mr. PROUT. I was there several times, but I don't—I am sure that there were no organized meetings going on at the time that I was there except in one case, a public meeting was going on.

The times that I went to Oklahoma City, I usually just dropped up to the party office there and talked with whoever was there, which would have been Robert Wood or Ina, Mrs. Ina Wood.

Mr. TAVENNER. What were the names of the Communist Party members you met in the headquarters in Oklahoma City?

Mr. PROUT. In addition to Robert Wood there was Mrs. Wood, whose name was Ina, and chap by the name of Jaffe, Eli.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know his first name?

Mr. PROUT. Eli Jaffe. There was one other who had some sort of a responsible position, but I can't recall what his name was.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the position of Ina Wood, if any, as a functionary of the party?

Mr. PROUT. I don't believe I ever knew of any title in connection with her.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was she doing at the headquarters, as far as you could determine? Was it secretarial work, or was it any other class of work that you could describe to the committee?

In other words, was she working in the headquarters?

Mr. PROUT. She was there, I believe, almost every time I was there. As far as function is concerned, I don't recall ever having seen her performing any work. Sometimes with the literature, probably, stacking it around, or something.

Mr. TAVENNER. And Mr. Eli Jaffe, what position did he have as a functionary of the party, if any?

Mr. PROUT. Now, there, again, I don't believe I recall ever having heard a title in connection with his name.

Mr. TAVENNER. How many trips did you make to the headquarters?

Mr. PROUT. I would say around five, four or five or six.

Mr. TAVENNER. Over what period of time did you make those trips?

Mr. PROUT. There would have been several in 1938. I don't recall any in 1939; there probably was, though.

Mr. TAVENNER. That means that on about three occasions you went to the State headquarters after 1939.

Mr. PROUT. After 1939?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes. You stated that there were several occasions in 1938, as I understood you.

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. And none in 1939?

Mr. PROUT. No; and possibly one in—

Mr. TAVENNER. I see.

Mr. PROUT. No; I say there probably were some in 1939.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you ever visit the headquarters in Oklahoma City, that is, the headquarters of the Communist Party after the year 1939?

Mr. PROUT. I am sure that I didn't. If I have my dates right, here, I never visited them after leaving school at Stillwater in the spring. I am almost sure the year was 1939, the spring of 1939; yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. How far was Stillwater from Oklahoma City?

Mr. PROUT. About 80 miles.

Mr. TAVENNER. How did you travel?

Mr. PROUT. I usually hitchhiked down, caught a ride.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the purpose of these five trips you made to Oklahoma City when you visited the headquarters of the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. One was to attend an open meeting that was being held. I don't know——

Mr. TAVENNER. Did other members of your group in Stillwater accompany you?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. On that occasion?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; they did.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who were they?

Mr. PROUT. Pat Allen, I believe Harry Jury—I am not sure about that.

Mr. TAVENNER. All right, now, tell us the purposes of your other trips to headquarters.

Mr. PROUT. I don't believe there was any particular purpose. I don't believe we were called in. I cannot recall ever having been asked to come in. And when we did go, it was just to go down and talk, and that sort of thing.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, will you tell us about the activity of your group of the Communist Party?

Mr. WOOD. Before we leave that, I have a question.

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes, sir.

Mr. WOOD. When you were called in to headquarters from Stillwater, 80 miles away, who called you?

Mr. PROUT. I didn't mean to say that we were called in. I think I said that we weren't called.

Mr. TAVENNER. You were not called?

Mr. PROUT. We were not called. We usually went to just go down to talk.

(Representative James B. Frazier, Jr., left the hearing room at this point.)

Mr. WOOD. You said you were notified about the open meeting you had there. Who notified you about that?

Mr. PROUT. That would have been Bob Wood, yes.

Mr. WOOD. Bob Wood?

Mr. PROUT. Yes. I don't recall just how we got the word on that, but I believe a letter or something came up telling us about this meeting.

Mr. WOOD. Is that the only instance in which you went to Oklahoma City?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. I am talking about my request of Wood, or some other functionary of the party out there at Oklahoma City. Is that the only instance you went there by request, and the rest of the time you just drifted in?

Why did you go the other times?

Mr. PROUT. I am trying to answer your first question. I think there was another occasion where they were having some kind of a party down there and they asked us to attend, if we wanted to.

Mr. WOOD. Where was that party held? At the headquarters?

Mr. PROUT. No; it was held at another location.

Mr. WOOD. Was it a home, or what?

Mr. PROUT. No, it was a hall; it was some sort of a hall, but I don't recall where it was located in town there.

Mr. WOOD. How did you find it?

Mr. PROUT. I think we went to the party office and went out with some of those folks.

Mr. WOOD. Was that a Communist Party meeting?

Mr. PROUT. No, it wasn't. It was some sort of a party that they had organized.

Mr. WOOD. You mean that there were people who attended that party who were not members of the party?

Mr. PROUT. Oh, yes; it was an interracial party, was what it was.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the purpose of the first meeting that you said you attended, which I understood was an open meeting?

Mr. PROUT. The open meeting? It was held in an auditorium, and the general public was advised that the meeting was going to be held, and various of the party people made talks.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who were they?

Mr. PROUT. Bob Wood and Ina Wood and the other chap whose name I cannot recall, as I said, was one of the mainsprings there.

Mr. WOOD. Were those all of the people who made talks at that meeting? Those three?

Mr. PROUT. I think that that is right; yes. I don't recall any other people talking.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was your last statement?

Mr. WOOD. He thinks they were the only three that made talks.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you go to the Communist Party headquarters in Oklahoma City for the purpose of obtaining Communist Party literature for dissemination among your group?

Mr. PROUT. We got some while we were there, almost on every occasion, I think. We didn't go for the purpose of getting it, but we usually did take some back; yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you recall what the nature of the Communist Party literature was?

Mr. PROUT. Most of them were thin pamphlets dealing with various subjects. I frankly never read very much of them.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, the Communist Manifesto, was that one of them?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; that was one of them.

Mr. TAVENNER. State and Revolution, by Lenin, do you recall that as one of them?

Mr. PROUT. I am sure that I have heard that title, but I don't know whether we had that.

Mr. TAVENNER. Left-Wing Communism, by Lenin; was that another?

Mr. PROUT. I don't believe I had that; no.

Mr. TAVENNER. Let me show you the booklet, State and Revolution by Lenin, and see if by looking at the cover and examining it, you can determine whether that is one of the books you received. [Handing booklet to the witness.]

Mr. PROUT. I am sure we never had any books that had this appearance, I mean the paper and the binding. I am sure that we had some with the picture on the front, but I just don't recall the title.

I just don't know.

Mr. TAVENNER. That is, pamphlets with the picture of Lenin on the front?

Mr. PROUT. Well, now, the one that I had in mind with Lenin on was a large picture that covered most of the page, I think, but I don't know what it was.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, was the Communist Party literature which you obtained there the Communist Party literature that the secretary, Robert Wood, desired that your group study?

I mean, it was given to you for the purpose of taking it back to your group and studying it?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, that is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. And you did study the Communist Party literature and discuss it at your meetings, did you not?

Mr. PROUT. In a limited amount, yes. Not too much of that. I believe—yes, there was some study, but not too much.

Mr. TAVENNER. Well, were various members of your group assigned topics or pamphlets for discussion at your group meetings from time to time?

Mr. PROUT. I think we started that one time and it didn't work. There was very little study done. But I do believe that we made assignments like that one time, or possibly two times, but they never came in to discuss them. I mean there was no participation.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was in charge of the handling of the literature?

Mr. PROUT. I was—Harry Jury and I split that function, I would say.

Mr. TAVENNER. How were the dues assessed and collected in your group?

Mr. PROUT. The dues were, I think, 10 cents a month. There were very few ever collected. I believe that I collected some. I don't recall how we handled the money after it was collected. I can recall a few occasions picking up a dime from this fellow or that fellow.

Mr. TAVENNER. What disposition was made of the dues when collected?

Mr. PROUT. I believe it was sent to Oklahoma City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were the dues ever delivered in person to any officials in Oklahoma City, any officials of the Communist Party.

Mr. PROUT. I just do not recall that they were. I just don't know the answer to that. You see, there was such a small amount actually ever paid in, people, most of them joined and never paid any dues after that.

Mr. TAVENNER. You stated you left the college at Stillwater in the spring, or in 1939, and you had completed your work at that time?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you withdraw from the Communist Party, if at all?

Mr. PROUT. Well, now, by withdrawing—I just quit. I never made any further trips to Oklahoma City after that time. I received two letters, I believe it was, from them after I went home from school that year.

Mr. TAVENNER. I am trying to find out whether you ceased to be active in the Communist Party when you left school or whether you ceased to be active prior to leaving school. I am trying to fix the time. In other words, did your leaving the Communist Party, or at least ceasing to be active, date from the time of your leaving school, or was that something which occurred either earlier or later? Did your leaving school have anything to do with your becoming less active in the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. I had decided during the spring of that year to stop. I was——

Mr. TAVENNER. Why was that?

Mr. PROUT. I was becoming disgusted with the whole affair.

Mr. TAVENNER. What do you base that statement on? Why were you disgusted?

Mr. PROUT. Well, one thing, one very important thing, was that these stories were getting back to my home town.

Mr. TAVENNER. What stories?

Mr. PROUT. About my activities with the Communist Party, and they were, of course, embarrassing my folks there no end. Also the people themselves in the party, I just didn't care about. I don't mean our little local group there in the college, I mean, they were all right, but the party people themselves, I didn't care much about.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you advise the Communist Party in Oklahoma City, that is, the State organization, at any time that you expected to discontinue your activities in the party or that you had withdrawn from the party?

Mr. PROUT. No; I didn't. I never wrote them anything, or I never told the personnel.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now, how is the committee to understand there that you did actually sever your connection with the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. The only action that I took which was more a lack of action than action, was after I returned home from school that spring I received, I think, two letters from them. One of them was advising of a meeting to be held somewhere at some time during the summer, and I didn't attend that meeting. I think I just destroyed the letter and forgot about it. That was the first letter I received.

I am almost positive there was a second letter also which I am quite sure I didn't even open. I think I just destroyed it, or possibly sent it—no; I think I just destroyed it.

Mr. TAVENNER. I believe you told us that your first employment, or at least your first employment with the Government, was in 1941 when you became employed by the War Department in Washington.

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; that is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. I believe you said you were assigned to the Office of the Chief of Staff?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; that is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you tell the committee just what the nature of your duties were while employed by the War Department?

Mr. PROUT. Yes. While with the Chief of Staff's office I was in the Chief Clerk's department, a Mr. Statesir. And my work was in connection with a small office which duplicated things and handled printed supplies, small printed supplies.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you advise the War Department when you obtained employment that you had been a member of the Communist Party as recently as 1939?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir; I did not.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you file, at the time of your employment with the War Department, what is known as a Form 57?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; I did. I believe they used that form at that time, some sort of application form, anyway.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Chairman, we have called for the production of the paper which was signed, but we have not yet received it. It is in St. Louis.

Do you recall what representation you made, if any, in 1941 applying for this position with regard to your membership previously in the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. I assume that the 57 had some question on there about that. I don't recall that it did, but some question similar to the one I imagine you are referring to the question that is on the 57 now some similar question.

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

Mr. PROUT. Of course, whether or not it would pertain to communism, or whatever at that time, I don't know.

Mr. KEARNEY. If it did, you didn't tell the truth, anyway, did you?

Mr. PROUT. Sir?

Mr. KEARNEY. If there was such a question on that application you did not tell the truth with reference to your affiliation with the Communist Party in answer to that question?

Mr. PROUT. I don't believe the question was asked. I know that I wouldn't have made a bald statement denying membership in the Communist Party.

Mr. KEARNEY. Did you say you had asked for that, Mr. Tavenner?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

What was your next employment in the Government?

Mr. PROUT. With the office of the Secretary of War.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the character of the duties performed by you when you were with the office of the Secretary of War?

Mr. PROUT. I was known as a classification analyst. That involved reviewing job sheets and determining what classification grade they should hold.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you sign another Form 57 in connection with your employment in that office?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; I believe that it was required on every transfer.

Mr. TAVENNER. So the same type form was signed by you?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then your next employment seems to be with the Quartermaster General.

Mr. PROUT. That is right; yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. What was the nature of your duties there?

Mr. PROUT. The same thing, classification analyst. And at the latter part of that employment, making general personnel surveys, effectiveness of personnel operation.

Mr. TAVENNER. While you were engaged in those various services for the Government, were you ever solicited to return to the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir. I don't believe I have ever met a Communist at any time that I was in the Government.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then your next employment with the Government was with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in Texas?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; that is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. What has been the character of your duties while working for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation?

Mr. PROUT. Personnel and administrative work.

Mr. TAVENNER. During the entire period of your employment?

Mr. PROUT. Yes. I have done a few other things too. I have made a few appraisals and have written up a few applications.

Mr. TAVENNER. Are you still employed by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, I am.

Mr. WOOD. Excuse me, Mr. Tavenner.

Mr. TAVENNER. Surely.

Mr. WOOD. Did you transfer from the War Department to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation at your own request or were you transferred?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, at my own request. That is, I sent them an application asking for a job.

Mr. WOOD. Well, were you transferred with your own classification that you had in the War Department as far as civil service is concerned, or did you get a higher classification?

Mr. PROUT. No, I got a lower classification. You see, at that time the RFC had a different grading system than the War Department, and I was a grade 11 with the War Department, and I believe my transfer to RFC actually involved a lower equivalent grade. But I don't believe there was any—yes, there was a slight loss in pay.

Mr. WOOD. Decrease or increase?

Mr. PROUT. A slight decrease in pay.

Mr. WOOD. What was the purpose of seeking employment at a lower rate of pay in the RFC than you had in the War Department?

Mr. PROUT. The depot in California was moving from Oakland out into a rural area, Stockton, or close to Stockton, and I didn't want to go there.

You see, they were merging several depots, is what they were doing, I think a medical, an engineer, and quartermaster depot were merging out in this rural area.

Mr. WOOD. That was where you were located at the time you made your transfer to the RFC? Were you located in California?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; in Oakland.

Mr. WOOD. You made your transfer to the RFC at what place?

Mr. PROUT. San Antonio.

Mr. WOOD. That is where you are presently located?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir.

Mr. WOOD. And you made that transfer when?

Mr. PROUT. In 1946.

Mr. WOOD. And you have been in San Antonio continuously since that time?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; that is right.

Mr. WOOD. All right.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Prout, I ask you whether or not you filed a Form 57 when you became employed in 1946 by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Now I hand you what purports to be a photostatic copy of an application for Federal employment on Form 57, and I will ask you if this is the form which you signed in 1946? [Handing document to the witness.]

(Representative Bernard W. Kearney left the room at this point.)

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; I am sure this is the one.

Mr. TAVENNER. I offer the Form 57 in evidence and ask that it be marked "Prout Exhibit No. 1."

Mr. WOOD. That will be admitted.

(The document referred to, marked "Prout Exhibit No. 1," is filed herewith.)

Mr. TAVENNER. Is that your signature at the end of the form?

Mr. PROUT (after examining document). Yes, sir; it is.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you read question 17 and your answer, please?

Mr. PROUT. Question 17:

Do you advocate or have you ever advocated, or are you now, or have you ever been a member of any organization that advocates the overthrow of the Government or the United States by force and violence?

Mr. TAVENNER. What was your answer?

Mr. PROUT. "No."

Mr. TAVENNER. As a matter of fact, you had been a member of the Communist Party in 1939, had you not?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. You knew that that question had reference to membership in the Communist Party, did you not, at the time you signed it?

Mr. PROUT. No—I mean, the answer would have to be no. It could have referred to organizations which we knew at that time were violent in their methods, which would be the Fascists, or the Nazi organizations. You see, the Communist Party, as far as we were always told, was purely an organization which believed in accomplishing its objectives through legislation and education. The idea of violent tactics was never revealed.

Mr. WALTER. How did you reach that conclusion?

Mr. PROUT. Sir?

Mr. WALTER. How did you reach the conclusion that the objectives would be obtained through legislation?

Mr. PROUT. That is what we were always told.

Mr. WALTER. By whom?

Mr. PROUT. By the party people, and I think in their literature, too. I am not sure about that. I haven't read much.

Mr. TAVENNER. Let me refresh your recollection about that. The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, that you

said you received as part of the Communist literature, has this to say on that subject:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.

So it is part of the woof and warp of the Communist teachings. Again I quote from the Communist Manifesto:

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat we trace the more or less veiled civil war raging within existing society up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

So those teachings, it is apparent, right in the Communist Manifesto show the purposes of the Communist Party. And again I quote to you from State and Revolution by V. I. Lenin:

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the teaching of Marx and Engels regarding the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. It cannot be replaced by the proletarian state, a dictatorship of the proletariat, through withering away, but as a general rule only through violent revolution.

And again I quote:

The replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution.

Mr. WOOD. Did you read those documents that have been quoted from while you were a member of the party?

Mr. PROUT. I don't think that I have ever seen the last one that you read. Now, I have seen——

Mr. WOOD. You mean the one entitled "State and Revolution"? (Representative James B. Frazier, Jr., returned to the hearing room at this point.)

Mr. PROUT. I don't know that I have.

Mr. WOOD. You had it in your hand when you——

Mr. PROUT. I mean previous to this. But the other one, the Communist Manifesto, we did have that. Now, I don't think that I have ever read the Communist Manifesto from beginning to end. I think I have browsed in it a little bit, but that is about all.

Mr. TAVENNER. You see, it is a little difficult for me, at least, to understand how you could have had views at that time that the Fascists or Fascist organizations, of which you were not a member, were endeavoring to use force and violence, to overthrow our form of Government, and that the Communist Party, of which you were a member, did not.

Do you not recognize that the Communist Party did teach and advocate the overthrow of our Government by the use of force and violence at the time that you were a member of it?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir; I don't. I mean, they might have actually had that goal in mind, but as far as we were concerned, we were never told that the Communist Party advocated violence in attacking this country or overthrowing it.

Mr. TAVENNER. You knew at the time you signed the Form 57 that if you would answer that question "Yes" that you would not have been employed, did you not?

Mr. PROUT. Oh, I don't think that I would have been employed answering that question "Yes"; no, I don't. But I still think that

"No," although it is a questionable answer, or was, based upon what we were beginning to find out then, I still think that "No" would have to be the answer on that question. You see, in 1946 we didn't know lots of things which we have certainly found out in the last 2 or 3 or 4 years.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you mean to state that in 1946 there was any doubt in your mind that the Communist Party advocated the overthrow of our Government by the use of force and violence, if necessary?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; I think that there was a big doubt in my mind. I don't believe that I had any proof at that time that the Communist Party planned to overthrow this Government by force and violence.

Mr. TAVENNER. When did you first become acquainted with the purposes of the Communist Party with reference to that subject?

Mr. PROUT. To the violent aspect? The first proof with respect to the attitude of our Government, what our Government thought about communism, the Communist Party in this country, started coming out in the last 2 or 3 or 4 years. One, of course, was through the publication of the list of subversive organizations, I believe that was published, or put out by the Department of Justice.

And of course the New York trial tended to prove that it was an unconstitutional organization. In my memory, it has only been fairly recently that the Government has established legally, or otherwise, that the Communist Party was a force or violence which would stop at nothing to accomplish its world-wide objectives.

Mr. WOOD. If you had been advised of the character of organization that you now understand it to be, would you have joined it?

Mr. PROUT. I would not; no.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you ever report —

Mr. PROUT. I would like to qualify that a little bit, of course, that you don't know what you will do at—I guess I was 20 years old, or 19, possibly. But certainly I wouldn't join anything which would advocate the violent overthrow of this Government.

Mr. WOOD. When you took employment initially with the Federal Government, did you advise the employing agency that employed you that you had been a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. No.

Mr. WOOD. Have you ever, since you have been employed by the Federal Government, advised the employing agency by whom you were employed of your membership in the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. The RFC.

Mr. WOOD. When did you do that?

Mr. PROUT. About 3 years ago.

Mr. WOOD. After you had been employed by them?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. WOOD. At the time you saw them to obtain employment, you did not advise them of it?

Mr. PROUT. No.

Mr. WOOD. So you have never taken a position in all the positions you have had with the Federal Government, you have never initially taken the position and given the Government officials the information as to your previous membership in the party?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir.

Mr. TAVENNER. What were the circumstances under which you advised the RFC about 3 years ago of your former Communist Party membership?

Mr. PROUT. The RFC charged me under the loyalty program, the Federal employees' loyalty program.

Mr. TAVENNER. That means that the Federal Bureau of Investigation must have received information through some investigation that you had been a member of the Communist Party, and referred the matter to your department, as a result of which charges were preferred against you; is that what you mean?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; that is my understanding of it; yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Then charges were preferred against you in which it was claimed that you had been a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. When was that charge made?

Mr. PROUT. It was about 3 years ago. I just cannot recall the month or the actual year.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were you giving a hearing on that charge?

Mr. PROUT. No. I was required to prepare an answer to the charges, which I did, a written answer to the charges, which I did.

Mr. TAVENNER. In that written answer did you admit or deny that you had been a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. PROUT. I admitted that I had.

Mr. TAVENNER. What did you advise as to the circumstances under which you had become a member? What did you advise the employing agency were the circumstances under which you had been a member of the party?

Mr. PROUT. The same thing that I have been pointing out here, that it occurred at Stillwater, Okla., during 1938 through 1939.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you have a copy of the explanation which you made?

Mr. PROUT. No; I don't have.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you have any objection to this committee seeing a copy of the explanation you made, if the employing agency is willing to turn it over to us for inspection?

Mr. PROUT. I would have none whatsoever.

Mr. TAVENNER. I mean, as far as you are concerned, you have no objection?

Mr. PROUT. That is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. To this committee examining the statement which you made to the employing agency?

Mr. PROUT. No; I would have no objection at all.

Mr. TAVENNER. You state, then, that you were not given a hearing, but that you prepared this answer to which you referred in reply?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. What action was taken?

Mr. PROUT. I was suspended for 30 days. And they considered my reply and asked for additional information. Eventually they cleared me under the program and I returned to duty.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know of your own knowledge whether or not the answering of "No" to question 17 on the Form 57 was referred to the Department of Justice or was considered by the Department of Justice for prosecutive action on the grounds of making a false statement?

Mr. PROUT. No; I didn't know that. I knew that something was referred to the Department of Justice, but I didn't know just what the character of it was.

Mr. TAVENNER. Tell us more about that. What were the circumstances under which you were made aware of the reference of some matter to the Department of Justice?

Mr. PROUT. Mr. Drew Pearson made some comment over the radio regarding it. I didn't hear the comment, but it referred to the Department of Justice being interested or—I just don't recall what it was.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you make any inquiry of the employing agency when you learned that over the radio?

Mr. PROUT. You mean RFC?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

Mr. PROUT. No; I did not.

Mr. TAVENNER. So that the only knowledge you had was the possible reference of this matter to the Department of Justice or the consideration of this matter by the Department of Justice?

Mr. PROUT. Nothing came down from RFC on it at all.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who was your immediate superior in the RFC at the time that you were cleared?

Mr. PROUT. F. M. Conlon, C-o-n-l-o-n.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you, of your own knowledge, know whether he knew of your former Communist Party membership?

Mr. PROUT. He would have known, because my papers, my replies, and so forth, went through him.

Mr. TAVENNER. Went through him?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. So he is bound to have known through your own statement of your admission of former Communist Party membership?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, that is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you tell the committee the basis upon which you were cleared by the agency?

Mr. PROUT. They wrote a letter back addressed to me saying that their committee had considered my case, and based upon their findings, they did not consider me to be disloyal to the Government of the United States, I believe is the way it read.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you have that letter?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir, I didn't bring any of those papers.

Mr. TAVENNER. Will you send it to the committee for its inspection on your return?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, I will.

(NOTE.—In compliance with request of committee counsel, the following was sent to the committee to be included in the record:)

OCTOBER 14, 1948.

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION FEDERAL EMPLOYEES LOYALTY PROGRAM

To: Lynne L. Prout:

In accordance with Executive Order 9835, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Loyalty Board has considered all matters presented to it concerning your loyalty to the Government of the United States and has made a determination of the case under the standard contained in said Executive order which provides that any removal of an employee from Government employment on the ground of disloyalty shall be that, on all the evidence, reasonable grounds exist for the belief that the employee involved is disloyal to the Government of the United States.

It is the determination of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Loyalty Board that, on all the evidence, reasonable grounds do not exist for the belief that you are disloyal to the Government of the United States.

LEO NIELSON,

Secretary, Reconstruction Finance Corporation Loyalty Board.

Mr. TAVENNER. Is there any objection on your part to the committee seeing any correspondence that there may be in the RFC agency with regard to the reference of question 17 in the Form 57 to the Department of Justice for possible criminal prosecution or the consideration by them of such action? Do you understand my question?

Mr. PROUT. Not entirely, no.

Mr. TAVENNER. Is there any objection on your part to this committee reviewing or seeing any documents that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation may have in its possession relating to the reference to the Department of Justice for its consideration of this matter of possible prosecution?

Mr. PROUT. I see what you mean.

Mr. TAVENNER. For an alleged false statement in answering question 17 on the Form 57.

Mr. PROUT. No; I would have no objection.

(Representative James B. Frazier, Jr., left the room at this point.)

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Chairman, I have called on the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to present such records as it may have on that subject, and I trust before the day is over that we may have some answer.

(Representative James B. Frazier, Jr., returned to the room at this point.)

Mr. TAVENNER. I want to refer back to the time when you said you won a trip by recruiting the greatest number of persons in a certain area for the Communist Party. Where did you go on that trip?

Mr. PROUT. New York City.

Mr. TAVENNER. Tell us what occurred.

Mr. PROUT. At New York City?

Mr. TAVENNER. Let us begin at the beginning, and state to the committee whether there were other persons who went with you whom you learned were members of the Communist Party.

Mr. PROUT. There were two who went, I mean two others. One was a Negro chap, whose name I don't recall, and the other was a quite elderly white man.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you know his name?

Mr. PROUT. No, I don't.

Mr. TAVENNER. Do you mean you have forgotten his name?

Mr. PROUT. That is right, I just don't remember.

Mr. TAVENNER. You did know at the time?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; oh, yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where did you go when you went to New York City?

Mr. PROUT. First we went to the Union Square Hotel, and then we went to some writers' organization.

Mr. TAVENNER. Tell the committee the circumstances under which you went to the writers' organization, that is, how you happened to go there, and who solicited you to go there.

Mr. PROUT. Someone just took me there. I just don't know who it was that took me to that address. As I recall, we were on our way

to some meeting place and we stopped by there, and then we went on out to an auditorium way up in the north end of New York.

MR. TAVENNER. Do you remember the name of the writers' organization?

MR. PROUT. No; I don't.

MR. TAVENNER. Is there anything about it that you can tell us which may enable us to identify it?

MR. PROUT. All I recall about it is that it was downtown, and I just have no idea where downtown it was.

MR. TAVENNER. What other meetings did you attend while in New York City?

MR. PROUT. The other meetings were regular convention meetings of the Communist Party. Most of them, or all of them, I believe, were held in some sort of auditorium way up north somewhere. And the last meeting was held in Madison Square Garden. That was an open meeting, as I recall. I know it was an open meeting.

MR. TAVENNER. What was the date on which you went to New York on this trip?

MR. PROUT. I just have no idea. It was during the winter, late fall, or—I don't know.

MR. TAVENNER. Can you give us a further description of this meeting which you attended, this large meeting in Madison Square Garden?

MR. PROUT. Yes. There were a number of speeches made. The place was almost full.

MR. TAVENNER. Can you recall the names of the speakers?

MR. PROUT. Browder, I don't believe he talked. I think that he was sick, Earl Browder. I think he was sick at that time. He was supposed to talk but couldn't. Well, I just don't recall who did speak. I assume that Foster, William Foster, talked, but I just don't know for sure.

MR. TAVENNER. Well, other than sightseeing excursions around the city, will you tell us what other meetings or places you went?

MR. PROUT. At one time we were taken out to the Daily Worker publication plant of the Daily Worker.

MR. TAVENNER. Did you meet any of the functionaries of the party while at the office of the Daily Worker?

MR. PROUT. I met Foster.

MR. TAVENNER. William Z. Foster?

MR. PROUT. Yes. And I met a Negro by the name of Ford, I think. I think now that that Ford is right, I am not sure about that.

MR. TAVENNER. Was it James Ford?

MR. PROUT. The only thing that sticks in my mind is the name Ford. I am not sure that that is right. But I believe it is.

And I met the editor of the Daily Worker. Just for a second I can't recall.

MR. TAVENNER. Clarence Hathaway?

MR. PROUT. Yes; that is it.

MR. TAVENNER. How did it happen that you were introduced to these high functionaries of the Communist Party?

MR. PROUT. I don't know. I was just taken in there. I went in, I believe, with Robert Wood, and the next thing I knew I was being introduced to two or three of these people there.

MR. TAVENNER. Who paid the expenses of your trip to New York?

MR. PROUT. The Communist Party.

Mr. TAVENNER. How were those expenses made available to you?

Mr. PROUT. I was given a few dollars.

Mr. TAVENNER. By whom?

Mr. PROUT. I think it was by Wood himself.

Mr. TAVENNER. That is Robert Wood?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Where were you given that money by Wood?

Mr. PROUT. At Tulsa.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was any other person present?

Mr. PROUT. I think there were several people around; yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Can you give us their names?

Mr. PROUT. I don't know who was there. I recall that when we started on this trip we went to a certain address, a downtown address.

Mr. TAVENNER. In what city?

Mr. PROUT. In Tulsa. And I was given a few dollars, I think it was \$10 or \$15, something like that. And, as I recall, there were several people there, but I don't know who they were. I just don't recall. I would have known at the time.

Mr. TAVENNER. How were your hotel bills paid in New York City?

Mr. PROUT. Let's see, it was from the same source. I assume that I got more money later on. I know they paid for my bus fare coming home.

Mr. TAVENNER. Who paid you?

Mr. PROUT. There, again, I think it was Bob Wood. I am almost sure it was him.

Mr. TAVENNER. I believe you said that Robert Wood introduced you in the Daily Worker to the high functionaries. Did Robert Wood go with you on this trip?

Mr. PROUT. No, no, he wasn't along. He was there when I got there, but he didn't go with us, no.

Mr. TAVENNER. You went by bus?

Mr. PROUT. I came back by bus and went up by car.

Mr. TAVENNER. I am trying to trace the exact financial transactions that took place.

Mr. PROUT. I am trying to help you on that. The first money that I got was in Tulsa.

Mr. TAVENNER. Which was at the time that you left on your trip?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. And you told us that was just \$10 or \$15?

Mr. PROUT. I think so. It struck me at the time as being a small amount; yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. How was the money for your hotel bill paid?

Mr. PROUT. I don't know for sure. I have to assume that I was given more money later on, but I don't recall being given any more.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did Robert Wood stay in the same hotel where you were?

Mr. PROUT. No, he didn't

Mr. WALTER. May I interrupt you at that point?

Mr. TAVENNER. Yes.

Mr. WALTER. Who attended this convention?

Mr. PROUT. Do you mean from Oklahoma?

Mr. WALTER. No, the entire attendance. Was it made up of students or was it a convention of delegates from various Communist organizations?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, it was delegates from all over the country.

Mr. WALTER. Delegates from what organization?

Mr. PROUT. The Communist Party.

Mr. WALTER. So that you were actually a delegate from the State of Oklahoma?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; that is right.

Mr. TAVENNER. Was this the annual convention?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; I think it was.

Mr. WOOD. Did you say you went up there in an automobile?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; that is right.

Mr. WOOD. In whose car?

Mr. PROUT. It was somebody from Tulsa.

Mr. WOOD. Don't you know whose it was?

Mr. PROUT. I don't know what the fellow's name is, I mean, I don't remember what his name is.

Mr. WOOD. Did he go with you in the car?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. WOOD. And you rode all the way from Tulsa to New York with the man and you don't remember his name?

Mr. PROUT. I have no idea of what his name is; no. I mean, I did know what his name was, of course, but I don't know what it is now.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did he attend any of the meetings, the Communist Party meetings, with you in New York, the person that drove you up there?

Mr. PROUT. I don't know. I only saw him one time after I got to New York. I don't believe that he attended any—I mean, I don't think I saw him at any of the meetings. I don't believe he attended. I saw him one evening somewhere. I just don't recall exactly when or under what circumstances.

Mr. WOOD. Why did you not come back to Tulsa with him?

Mr. PROUT. I understood that he was going up there on his own business, of some sort or another, and wasn't going back right away, or something.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did you share your room at the hotel with any other delegate to the convention?

Mr. PROUT. No; I was alone in the hotel.

Mr. TAVENNER. You said this was the national convention of the Communist Party in 1938?

Mr. PROUT. Wait a minute, now, I think I know part of the answer to the hotel question. We only stayed in the hotel for a part of the time, and then I stayed one night at one address and one or two nights at another address.

Mr. TAVENNER. In whose homes did you spend the night?

Mr. PROUT. I just have no idea what their names were, or the address.

Mr. TAVENNER. Were they Communist Party members?

Mr. PROUT. I don't know, of course, but I assume that they were.

Mr. TAVENNER. Did they attend any of the meetings which you attended?

Mr. PROUT. One of them did. I saw them at one of the meetings.

Mr. TAVENNER. You stated that this was the national convention of the Communist Party for the year 1938. That convention was held on May 27 to 31 of 1938. Is that the time that you were there?

Mr. PROUT. I thought that it was farther back in the winter than that. I know we ran into some snow on the way up there, a snow-storm in Pennsylvania, and I thought it was earlier in the year.

Mr. WOOD. I understand you to say at the beginning of your testimony that you did not join the party until the fall of 1938. I thought you were telling the committee that the convention——

Mr. PROUT. Well, would it have been the meeting in the spring of 1939?

Mr. WALTER. Can you not fix the time in connection with the time when you joined the party? Was it 6, 7, or 8 months after you joined the party that you went to this convention?

Mr. PROUT. Yes; I think it would have been about quite some time, 6 months, I would say, at least; yes.

Mr. WALTER. So you joined in 1938 and then it was the convention of 1939 that you attended, was it not?

Mr. PROUT. Yes.

Mr. TAVENNER. Mr. Chairman, that is all I desire to ask.

Mr. WOOD. Do you have any further questions, Mr. Walter?

Mr. WALTER. Whose name did you give as reference when you received your first job with the Government? Do you remember?

Mr. PROUT. I believe J. W. McCullum would have been one.

Mr. WALTER. Who is he?

Mr. PROUT. He is from my home town.

Mr. WOOD. What is your home town?

Mr. PROUT. Medford, Okla.

Mr. WALTER. What is his occupation?

Mr. PROUT. He had and still has his own system of educational supplements, books, in other words, which he reproduces and sells to the schools in Oklahoma.

Mr. WALTER. Is he a party member, a Communist Party member?

Mr. PROUT. No, sir.

Mr. WALTER. Do you remember any other names that you gave as references?

Mr. PROUT. No; I don't.

Mr. WALTER. That is all.

Mr. WOOD. Mr. Frazier?

Mr. FRAZIER. I have no questions.

Mr. WOOD. Did you say your home address where you were reared was Medford?

Mr. PROUT. Medford, M-e-d-f-o-r-d.

Mr. WOOD. Medford, Okla.?

Mr. PROUT. That is right.

Mr. WOOD. How far is that from Stillwater?

Mr. PROUT. That is about a hundred miles.

Mr. WOOD. Do you have any further questions, Mr. Counsel?

Mr. TAVENNER. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. Is there any reason why the witness should not be excused?

Mr. TAVENNER. I would rather for the witness not to be excused permanently, as we are still working on these matters, and we may want to confer with him.

Mr. WOOD. Do you want to retain him here?

Mr. TAVENNER. The rest of the day.

Mr. WOOD. And at the conclusion of the day you will release him?

Mr. TAVENNER. I think we will be able to release him at the end of the day.

Mr. WOOD. All right. I want to express my appreciation and that of the committee for your coming here. Do I understand that you are here on subpena?

Mr. PROUT. Yes, sir; that is right.

Mr. WOOD. I hope that the service of the subpena and your subsequent attendance here has not caused you any too much inconvenience. As soon as the staff is finished with their further conference with you, you may be excused.

Mr. PROUT. Yes. Thank you.

Mr. WOOD. Is there anything else today, Mr. Counsel?

Mr. TAVENNER. No, sir.

Mr. WOOD. The committee will stand in recess until further call. (Whereupon, at 12:35 p. m., the committee was recessed, subject to the call of the Chair.)

×

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 05445 4762

